

THE
Rulers and Sovereigns
of
ENGLAND.

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THE
RULERS AND SOVEREIGNS
OF
ENGLAND.

PRINTED AT THE ADVERTISER OFFICE, LONDON.
1867.

TO

DEAR LITTLE MARIA ELIZABETH B.

THESE LINES ARE AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED BY

HER GRANDMOTHER.

THE
RULERS AND SOVEREIGNS
OF ENGLAND.

ANCIENT BRITONS AND ROMANS.

In Britain, two thousand years gone by,
No cultured landscape smiled;
The natives were brave, but uncivilized,
Their country a trackless wild.

No stately castle then crowned the hills,
In this ancient land of ours;
No cottage adorned her beautiful vales,
Where roses and jasmine perfume the gales;
No charming homesteads, no palace nor church,
No gardens of fruits and flowers.

The people wore skins of the wolf or the deer
They had slain with their arrows true;
They dwelt in caves, or rude clay-built huts,
And painted their bodies blue.

Till the Romans beheld from the shores of Gaul*

 Her white cliffs across the sea,
Then away they sail determined to know
 What that far distant land might be.

With their bows and their clubs the natives confront

 The well-disciplined troops of Rome,
Who with corslet and helm, and bright weapons of steel,
 Were invading their island home.

Tho' the Britons were warlike, the contest was vain,

 And many a harrowing tale,
We are told of the insults their brave chiefs endured,
 As the conquering Romans prevail.

Forts, towns, palaces rise, while fine broad roads

 Cut the forests and marshes through,
And the natives were taught many useful arts,
 Which before they never knew.

So I think 'twas by God's good providence
 That these civilized Romans were sent,
For the natives improved in their habits of life
 Wherever that people went.

And they ruled in our ancient British land
 Four hundred years and more,
Till barbarous tribes their own invade,
 On the bright Italian shore.

*France.

Saxons.

SAXONS.

No sooner had Rome her legions withdrawn,
Than the Picts and Scots descend,
And the Britons the Anglo-Saxons implore,^r
Their country to aid and defend.

They came, and finding the land more fair,
More fertile than their own,
The Britons were driven to their hills in the west,
And completely overthrown.

The country they part into separate shares,
And each had a king of its own.
Till Egbert united the Heptarchy,
And governed as sovereign alone.

So henceforward England* our land is named,
No longer the Albion of Rome,
And ever progressing since Egbert's time,
Has the mightiest nation become:

A grandson of Egbert at length was king,
And wisely he governed the State;
He drove back the Danes, who were spoiling the land,
And we call him Alfred the Great!

*Angle or Engle-land.

He made the division of Counties or Shires,
Wise and just were the laws which he framed,
He obtained for his subjects the blessing of peace,
And their barbarous manners reclaimed.

But again, in after times, the Danes
Their ruinous course pursue,
That Canute, and two other Danish kings,
Were sovereigns of England, too.

There were Ethelbert, Egbert, and many besides,
Who all in their turns were kings,
Till Harold the Second, whose death to a close
The Saxon dynasty brings.

While Harold was gone to the distant north
To repel the Norwegian host,
The Normans a powerful fleet had manned,
And invaded the southern coast.

Tho' harassed and weary, he could not resolve
His own uncontested to yield;
So struggling bravely from morn to eve,
He died on the battle field.

Normans.

enthusiasm

NORMANS.

In the year one thousand and sixty-six,

At the battle of Hastings, was slain

The Saxon king Harold, and Norman duke William

The Conqueror began his reign.

Oppression and cruelty, torture and pain,

Then crushed every true English heart;

Twas treason to call field or homestead their own,

And death from his laws to depart.

He seized the broad lands of the Saxon Thanes,

To enrich his proud Norman race;

Of others, he tore down the peaceful homes,

To make a wide field for the chase.

Where his worthless son Rufus, while hunting the deer,

We learn was by accident slain;

Some think the arrow was purposely aimed,

But that must unravelled remain.

Henry Beauclerc then quickly seized the crown,

Which he should not have done by right,

For Robert, his brother, was older than he,

But was gone to the Crusade to fight.

The Saracens, masters of Syria then,

Where the Saviour on earth passed his day,
Very cruelly treated all Christian men
Who went to his tomb to pray.

So the Christian princes and nobles collect
Vast armies, and traverse the sea,
That the pilgrims who flocked to Jerusalem
Might unmolested be.

Thus a warfare raged in the name of the Cross,
For that reason termed the "Crusade,"*
And the pilgrimage hence to the Holy Land
In comparative safety was made.

When Robert returned, the brothers fought,
And Henry the victory gained,
So Robert was placed in a castle in Wales,
Where a prisoner for life he remained.

Now the wife of Malcolm, Scotland's King,
A Saxon princess had been;
And Henry pleased the English well,
By making their daughter his queen.

How little King Henry thought of the grief,
The sorrow for him in advance:
When his only son perished while crossing the sea
That separates England from France.

*From crux, Latin for cross.

Thus his daughter, the Empress Matilda, or Maude,
Became heiress of England's throne;
Yet Stephen de Blois usurped the right,
And made the kingdom his own.

Still Matilda determined her claim to assert,
And a few short days did reign;
But so haughty she was, that the people resolved
To make Stephen their sovereign again.

Then her son, young Henry Plantagenet, said :
“ My right I will never resign,
Yet Stephen may govern as long as he lives,
And then the wide realm shall be mine.”

So as Henry the second he afterwards ruled,
And a sorrowful time he had :
For Thomas à Becket provoked him sore,
And his sons were rebellious and bad.

The queen, their mother, encouraged her sons
To act this undutiful part;
Which so wounded his feelings, and preyed on his mind
That he died of a broken heart.

His son, Richard the first, who the “Lion” was named
Soon joined in the famed crusade ;
But returning home, as a pilgrim clad,
He was seized and a prisoner made.

It was long ere the English heard that their king
Was deprived of his liberty;
But when it was known, a ransom was paid,
Which set the bold captive free.

Now this "Cœur de Lion" delighted in war,
So his armour he donned, and he seized his lance,
And was struck by an arrow too fatally aimed,
Whilst besieging the castle of Chalus in France.

His crown he left to his brother, John,
The worst of the bad was he:
Detested and scorned he lived and died,
As he justly deserved to be.

Young Arthur of Brittany was the heir,
As an elder brother's son,
But was murdered by John, tho' no record declares
How the barbarous deed was done.

Dark deeds of violence ruled the hour,
In that still uncivilized age,
And crimes of blackest dye deface
Our history's early page.

The Book of Life, indeed was known,
But was carefully kept concealed,
And those truths alone which the priests would select
To the people were ever revealed.

This John was a coward, and cowards you know

To treachery always incline;

But his barons were bold, and compelled their king

The Magna Charta to sign.

King John was the father of Henry the Third,

And he, as historians tell,

Was succeeded by Edward the First, his son,

Who governed his people well.

Edward was greatly loved and feared,

And the "English Solomon" named,

But for cruelties practised in Scotland and Wales,

King Edward severely is blamed.

Next Edward the Second, a frivolous king,

Yet his fate for our pity calls,

When we read how they cruelly murdered him

Within Berkley Castle walls,

In Scotland he lost all his father had gained,

And quickly was forced to return,

For brave Robert the Bruce had made Scotland free

At the battle of Bannockburn.

Edward the Third had a brilliant reign,

As in history plainly appears,

And his son, the Black Prince, was victorious

At Cressy and at Poictiers.

He was called "Black Prince," as the armour he wore
Was of dark and sable hue,
And has left the unblemished name of a knight,
Most courteous, gallant and true.

Ere his father he died, but left a son,

Richard the Second named—
A severe, tho' thoughtless, extravagant man,
And his conduct was highly blamed.

He banished the son of John of Gaunt,

But gave him his sacred word
That if any estate should fall to him
His right should not be transferred.

Now the father died, and Richard was false,

For he seized on all that he left;
So the son returned, to claim as his own,
That of which he had been bereft.

Duke of Lancaster now, "Sir King," he said,

" You have injured and done me wrong;
Your people say you have governed ill,
And swear they have borne it too long.

" So in future I will assist your grace,"

And Richard thus replies:

" Fair cousin, if so it pleases you;
It shall please us likewise."

Then he mounted the king on a sorry horse,
Himself on a gallant and trim,
And the people shout, "God bless our noble Duke,"
But none cried, "God bless him."

They mock and insult their fallen king,
Nor heed his sad despair ;
Then bore him to Pontefract Castle away,
And inhumanly murdered him there.

Thus Lancaster's Duke was crowned Henry the Fourth,
Yet he had but a sorrowful life,
For his reign was one continued scene,
Of treason, rebellion and strife.

Harry the Fifth was a warrior bold,
And many great battles he fought,
And a splendid but useless victory gained
On the plains of Agincourt.

These Lancastrian kings trace from John of Gaunt,
Fourth son of Edward the Third ;
The Yorkists from an elder son,
And many their claim preferred.

Now Henry the Sixth was a peacable man,
So the princes of York arose,
They swore the kingdom of right was theirs,
And Henry they depose.

They imprison and murder the gentle king,
His son they butcher, too,
Tho' Queen Margaret of Anjou bravely withstood,
As a wife and a mother true.

The symbol of York was a fair white rose,
The Lancastrian symbol was red,
And in the sad "Wars of the Roses," alas!
Many thousand brave Englishmen bled.

Fourth Edward, of York, a profligate king,
A cruel and barbarous man,
He cared not who sorrowed, who suffered or bled,
While from pleasure to pleasure he ran.

He died! but left two fair young sons,
Who were murdered within the Tower,
By Richard of Gloucester, their uncle, that he
Might attain the Sovereign power.

Which he held till Henry of Richmond came,
Who compelled the tyrant to yield:
They fought, and Richard the Third was killed
In the battle of Bosworth Field.

Now this Henry the Seventh, of Lancastrian descent,
Took the heiress of York for his wife,
Thus ending forever the sufferings caused
By the York and Lancaster strife.

Internal warfare, folly and crime,
Had sadly impoverished the land,
But Henry was politic, frugal and wise,
And ruled with a steady hand.

Notwithstanding his faults, much is due to this king
For the prudence with which he reigned,
For England, refreshed, sprang forth in her strength,
And riches and splendour regained.

In Westminster Abbey, a chapel he built,
For beauty and elegance famed;
And a ship, too, the largest old England had launched,
From him the "great Harry" was named.

Then Columbus discovered America,
By crossing the Western main
In three small ships, which were furnished to him
By the King and Queen of Spain.

York and Lancaster blend in King Henry the Eighth,
Who a merciless tyrant became;
His temper was cruel, and rude were his words,
His actions too shocking to name.

Two wives he beheaded, and two he divorced,
He defied the Pope of Rome,
Yet not for the Protestant cause, but that he
The head of a church might become.

His son, young Edward the Sixth, we learn,
Was ever to mercy disposed ;
His words and his actions when left to himself
A virtuous feeling disclose.

But soon it was heaven's mysterious will
To remove this excellent youth,
Who always seemed anxious to do the right.
And spread the gospel of truth.

Next, Mary, his sister, ascended the throne,
And hers was a barbarous reign ;
The realm she transferred to the Pope once more,
And married King Philip of Spain.

And now comes the great Elizabeth,
A queen to her people dear ;
That her faults were many, must be confessed,
Yet her memory we still should revere.

This politic, wise and magnificent Queen
Said, "I reign by a right Divine,
And the Bishop of Rome shall have no power
In this good realm of mine."

So the proud King of Spain a fleet sent forth,
To invade our English shore,
To wrest the crown from Elizabeth's brow,
And crush her queenly power.

Then she mounted her charger, and headed her troops,
Who followed wherever she led.

But the strong breath of heaven the Armada dispersed,
And the haughty Spaniard fled.

Tho' the death of Mary, the Scottish Queen,
Who to her for protection came,
Throws a dark, dark shade o'er the splendour that shines
On Elizabeth's glorious name.

Yet Mary—a wit, a beauty, a Queen--
With her Catholic friends, it is known,
Kept our Protestant Queen in continued fear
For her life and her rightful throne.

To Mary's son James next the English gave
Their bright and peerless crown,
And our island henceforward "Great Britain" is named,
As Scotland and England are one.

Now, of all that he said, or of all that he did,
There is little I wish to record,
Except that our present translation was made
(By his order) of God's Holy Word.

King Charles the First, in domestic life,
Kind and true to his children and wife,
But faith with his subjects so frequently broke,
That he lost both his crown and his life.

Then Oliver Cromwell usurped the rule,
And under his powerful sway
Old England recovered the glorious name
She bears to the present day.

But then he was cruel, ambitious, severe,
And our histories plainly declare
How in Ireland he treated the Catholics,
And his needless barbarities there.

Of the second King Charles, and his brother James,
I can little impart that is good;
James was a bigoted Catholic,
And the people his power withheld.

And soon he was forced from his home to fly,
With his wife and infant son,
When the King of France received them all—
King Louis of high renown.

James landed in Ireland, an army to raise,
And the French his troops did join;
But William of Orange defeated his hopes
At the battle of the Boyne.

And with Mary his wife, the daughter of James,
He was raised to the British throne;
But William survived his devoted wife,
And governed the kingdom alone.

This king, we are told, was wise and great,

A statesman and warrior he,

And Mary the Queen was fair and good,

A pattern for ladies she.

But who with a touch of dear filial love

Can a feeling of anger repress,

To read how she mounted her father's throne,

And neglected him in his distress.

When Ann, her sister, the sovereign became,

Their unhappy father was gone,

And their brother, too true to the Church of Rome,

Was denied the English crown.

Queen Ann's, we are told, was a glorious reign,

For great men lived and great battles were fought;

Though I never yet heard of the very great good

These splendid victories wrought.

Next George the Elector of Hanover reigned,

And the Stuart claim reversed—

A grandson he of Elizabeth,

Daughter of James the First.

Then Georges Second, Third and Fourth,

And William the Fourth succeed;

King George the Third had the longest reign

Of our English kings, we read.

Of our much loved lady Victoria,
Not a whisper of slander is heard :
The daughter of Edward Duke of Kent,
Fourth son of George the Third.

Most upright, just and affectionate
In every relation of life,
A pattern for others to follow is she,
As sovereign, mother and wife.

Yes, the present possessor of Britain's throne
Far, far excels all that have been,
For every nation acknowledges her
The virtuous, model Queen.

Queen Victoria is a descendant of the kings or chiefs of the ancient Britons—of the excellent Saxon king, Alfred the Great and Good; of William the Conqueror, and of the noble Robert Bruce, King of Scotland.

